

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 136

By Dickerson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Mario Ferrari of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Mario Ferrari; and

WHEREAS, an iconic figure in his adopted hometown of Nashville, Mario Ferrari was a legendary restaurateur and pioneer in fine-dining in the Music City, winning legions of loyal customers who treasured his personal ambiance and his exceptional attention to providing an enjoyable dining experience; and

WHEREAS, born in Trieste, Italy, to Carlo and Maria Ferrari, Mario Ferrari arrived in the United States in the 1950s as a young man, landing in New York with nothing to his name but a personal courage to seek his own success; and

WHEREAS, serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, Mario Ferrari saw duty for three years in Korea and eventually arrived in Nashville in 1963 to become manager of the exclusive "Executive Club"; and

WHEREAS, learning every aspect of the restaurant business, Mr. Ferrari focused his efforts on how to get customers and how to treat customers – a trait that would always be prevalent in every one of his restaurants; and

WHEREAS, in 1965, Mario Ferrari opened Mario's Ristorante in Nashville and delighted film and television stars, international celebrities, royalty, presidents, and political and business leaders from around the world with superior food, wine, and conversation; and

WHEREAS, the *Mobil Travel Guide* recognized and rewarded Mario's by awarding the coveted Four Star rating to the restaurant every year beginning in 1977; and

WHEREAS, this prestigious rating placed Mario's, which operated until 2006, in the top 2% of more than 20,000 establishments evaluated at that time and was determined by such

criteria as "...a unique and total dining experience characterized by an attractive and elegant setting, highly specialized professional service, exquisitely prepared and presented dishes..."; and

WHEREAS, expanding his restaurant empire, Mr. Ferrari opened a number of other food ventures during his lifetime, including Broadway Bistro, Casablanca, Wild Boar, and the still-operating Stock Yard, which he would sell to others after getting each off the ground; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, his award-winning restaurants received numerous awards, including the DiRoNA, AAA Four Star Diamond Award, Mobile 4 Star Award, Best of the Best 5 Star Diamond Award, and Wine Spectator's Award of Excellence; and

WHEREAS, Nashville and Advantage magazines recognized Mario's with awards such as Best Expensive Restaurant, Best Atmosphere, and Best Italian Dining; Mario's also won the Travel Holiday Award and the Top Dining Award; and

WHEREAS, Mario's was voted by Veronelli as one of the top ten Italian restaurants in the USA and Mr. Ferrari received the Lifetime Achievement Award for Best of the Best; and

WHEREAS, as a most appropriate tribute to his contributions to the Nashville restaurant community, this past May Mario Ferrari was given the inaugural Savor Award at the Savor Nashville event which gathered top chefs from across Nashville and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Mario Ferrari celebrated the pleasure of the union of wine and food and sought to share that pleasure and knowledge through his weekly wine columns for The Nashville Banner and in his prized book on vintage wine, *Mario Ferrari's Book on Wine and Food*, which is now a collector's item among wine-lovers; and

WHEREAS, Mario Ferrari trained many well-known chefs and served as Honorable Vice Conseiller Culinaire of the Nashville Chapter of the International Gourmet Society Chaine des Rotisseurs; Chairman of the Ete du Vin, a benefit wine auction for the American Cancer Society; and as a member of Ordre Mondial des Gourmets Degustateurs; and

WHEREAS, Mario Ferrari shared his expertise and charismatic personality by serving on the Commission on Tourism for Nashville, and the Tennessee Film, Tape and Music Commission and the Commission's Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, a worthy seaman, Mr. Ferrari shared his "sweet life" with his many friends and acquaintances on his elegant boat, the Dolce Vita, meaning "good times" or "sweet life"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ferrari was also deeply devoted to his family and is survived by his daughter, Gina Ferrari, who worked with her father at his restaurant for thirty-five years, and his two treasured grandsons, Eric Mario Ferrari, and Max Ferrari Pace; and

WHEREAS, Mario Ferrari leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional restaurateur, businessman, and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Mario Ferrari, reflecting fondly upon his resolute character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Ferrari.